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## Summer Beef Cattle Management Suggestions

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Those "lazy, hazy days" of summer will be here soon with warm weather, significant chance of drought periods and slowed growth of cool season pastures.

### Breeding

1. Cows bred on June 1 will calve in early to mid-March. Cows bred at the end of June will calve in early April. Many cattlemen terminate the breeding season at the end of June to prevent late spring calves. Also, breeding success decreases in late June and July.
2. Carefully observe the herd during the breeding season. Record observed heats and breeding activity so that problems can be identified as quickly as possible. Make certain that herd bulls are active, physically sound and settling the cows.
3. Pregnancy checking about 45 to 60 days after the breeding season is recommended to determine if cows are pregnant.

### Feeding

Grazing will usually provide adequate nutrition for mature cows. Supplementary grain may increase the conception rate in virgin heifers and heifers nursing their first calves.

1. Pastures should be carefully observed to avoid potential problems. For

example, fescue growth by June may result in coarse, low-quality pastures with a large percentage of seed heads that can irritate eyes. Weeds, such as thistles or others, can be causing problems. Strategic clipping and pasture rotation can assist.

2. Feed young bulls and thin bulls supplemental grain during the breeding season. One method is to individually feed the bulls in the pasture.

3. The threat of grass tetany is usually past, so many producers will discontinue use of magnesium in mineral mixtures.

### **Health**

Summer is a good time to work cattle, but it is better to start early enough to be finished by about 10:00 am. If possible, move cattle to a lot close to the barn the evening before.

1. Summer months are particularly suitable for using deworming products. In fact, worms may be easier to control on pastures in hot, dry weather because worms may not reproduce as well.

2. Consider implanting calves for the second (or first) time.

3. Control flies. A number of options are available. Insecticide impregnated fly tags have been widely used in recent years with increasingly variable (good and poor) results. Producers should be prepared to supplement ear tags with other methods. Dust bags, face rubbers and backrubbers with insecticide products will provide best results if cattle are forced to use them in order to get to salt-mineral or water. Other methods for controlling flies include feed additives, insecticide bolus, pour-ons and sprays. Follow label directions for use of these or any

animal health products.

4. Discuss vaccinating heifers for bangs (brucellosis) between 4 and 10 months of age with your veterinarian.

### **General Management**

1. Early June is often a good time to market calves that have been backgrounded on winter feed and spring pastures. It is also a time to consider selling fall calves.

2. Fescue and orchardgrass hay which was not cut in May should be cut as early in June as possible. Quality rapidly deteriorates as June progresses.

3. If pastures become over-grazed or low in quality, milk production may be affected. Move cattle to fresh pastures such as regrowth hay fields or summer annual pastures. A planned pasture rotation plan can assist in improving pasture utilization efficiency.

4. Provide plenty of fresh water. Mature, lactating cows may need as much as 16 to 18 gallons per day during hot weather. Observe water sources often. Plan alternative water sources. Avoid watering from shallow, dirty ponds and allowing cattle to wade in their primary water source.